



California Department of Public Health

Fact Sheet

Tuberculosis Control Branch

Division of Communicable Disease Control

Program Description

Tuberculosis Control Branch Mission Statement: To protect and improve the health of all, the California Tuberculosis Control Branch provides leadership and resources to control and eliminate tuberculosis.

The TB Control Branch works with the state's 61 local health departments to assess and improve our state's ability to:

- Find and treat active cases of TB to prevent deaths from TB, halt TB transmission, and stop the development and spread of drug resistant TB
- Find and treat those who have become infected by breathing in TB bacteria, so they do not develop active TB and spread it to others

Background

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease that is transmitted through the air from one person to another by tiny infectious airborne particles expelled when a person with TB disease coughs, sneezes or talks. Anyone inhaling the air containing these particles may become infected.

- **Latent TB infection** - In most people, the immune system keeps the TB bacteria in check, so the person does not feel sick and cannot spread TB to others. If untreated, the latent TB bacteria can become active and cause TB disease.
- **TB disease** - If active TB disease develops, TB bacteria attack the lungs or other parts of the body. It usually takes 6 months of treatment to cure the disease, which helps to ensure that the patient doesn't die or remain infectious and spread TB to others. Multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) - active TB caused by bacteria resistant to our most powerful drugs - is much more difficult and costly to treat and can be incurable. Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) is from strains of TB resistant to most, if not all, available treatment. XDR-TB may be impossible to treat and has a high mortality.

TB Branch roles include:

- field assistance to investigate outbreaks and help local TB programs fill programmatic gaps that allowed TB to spread
- oversee the care of all multidrug resistant (MDR) and extensively drug resistant (XDR) TB cases and their contacts to prevent spread of these deadliest strains
- work with local programs to evaluate and improve performance on key TB control indicators (TB Indicators Project, TIP)
- collect data and conduct studies to evaluate and guide TB control interventions
- ensure fiscal accountability and efficient application of resources to highest priority needs of the state and local TB programs

Program Goals

- Ensure prompt diagnosis and treatment of individuals with TB and their infected contacts to prevent TB from spreading.
- Expand the use of directly observed therapy to ensure TB patients are cured and do not develop drug-resistant TB.
- Ensure individuals with drug-resistant TB receive appropriate treatment and do not spread these deadly strains to others.
- Improve TB detection and prevention among newly arriving immigrants and refugees.
- Maintain housing and detention capacity so homeless or noncompliant TB patients can complete treatment.
- Work with the federal government and Mexico on a regional strategy to combat TB along the border.
- Halt and prevent TB outbreaks in health care facilities and community settings.

Statistics

California reports the most TB cases of any state, 21% of the nation's total.

More than 2,700 new cases of TB were reported in California in 2007. California also reports the most multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB cases of any state, and 1-2 cases of virtually untreatable, extensively drug resistant (XDR) strains of TB have been reported each year in California since 2000.

Racial and ethnic disparities in TB case rates in CA have not significantly narrowed in the past 10 years. TB case rates in Hispanics, African Americans and Asians and Pacific Islanders are five to 16 times higher than non-Hispanic whites.

Genotyping data suggest that a significant number of TB cases in California are due to recent transmission. Delays in diagnosis of TB cases and failure to identify and protect contacts allow continued spread of TB. Even if all the current cases of active TB were found and treated promptly, approximately 250 TB cases will continue to arise each year from the estimated reservoir of 1.4 million Californians infected with TB, if their latent infections are not detected and treated. It is most urgent to find and treat latent TB infection in persons with HIV, given their high risk of progression to active TB disease.

Contact Information

Tuberculosis Control Branch
Division of Communicable Disease Control
California Department of Public Health
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Bldg. P, 2nd Floor
Richmond, CA 94804-6403
510-620-3000
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx>